

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 947

By Gardenhire

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Kevin J. Worthen,
thirteenth president of Brigham Young
University.

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of the members of this General Assembly to recognize those leaders in academia who serve as exemplars, shaping the lives and minds of this nation's youth with the goal of perpetuating the public good, both locally and globally; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable individual is Kevin J. Worthen, the thirteenth president of Brigham Young University (BYU), an honorable, astute public servant who has devoted much of his career to serving his beloved alma mater; and

WHEREAS, born on April 15, 1956, in Dragerton, Utah, Kevin Worthen was the fourth of four children; he and his family moved to Price, Utah, when his father, a math teacher and junior high school principal, found work nearby; and

WHEREAS, a precocious child and well-rounded youth, Mr. Worthen was on the debate team, wrote for the school newspaper, sang in the choir, and played cornet in the band as a high school student; however, his teen years were most defined by his love of sports, particularly basketball. As a high school senior, he was named an All-State center, and he later served as captain for the College of Eastern Utah (CEU) Eagles; and

WHEREAS, his passion for sports extended to the BYU Cougars basketball team; with very rare exception, his family has made the annual pilgrimage to BYU's conference basketball tournament since 1993; and

WHEREAS, after serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to Monterrey, Mexico, Kevin Worthen dated Peggy Sealey while finishing his associate degree at CEU and working summers in a local coal mine; the two were married in 1978, soon after Mr.

Worthen transferred to BYU for his bachelor's degree, and they now have three children and three grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Kevin Worthen graduated *summa cum laude* from BYU with both a bachelor's degree in political science and a juris doctorate; he left the university in 1982 to clerk for Judge Malcolm R. Wilkey of the D.C. Circuit Court and, later, for Justice Byron R. White of the U.S. Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, he joined the respected law firm of Jennings Strouss & Salmon in Arizona, but his promising career with the firm was short-lived, as he eagerly accepted a faculty position with the J. Reuben Clark Law School, returning to his alma mater; and

WHEREAS, from 2004 to 2008, Mr. Worthen served as dean of the law school. He was subsequently named BYU's advancement vice president, in which role he oversaw such areas as athletics, BYU broadcasting, Latter-day Saints philanthropies, alumni, and communications; many significant developments in university athletics occurred during his tenure, including going independent in football, joining the West Coast Conference, and negotiating television contracts with ESPN; and

WHEREAS, concurrently with his responsibilities as president of BYU, Kevin Worthen serves as the Hugh W. Colton Professor of Law; his specialization lies in federal Indian law and the rights of indigenous peoples, the study of which was aided by a year spent as a Fulbright Scholar studying the cultural and ethnic assimilation of Chile's native populations; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his service to BYU, he has held various leadership positions in the church, including bishop, stake president, and Area Seventy, his current position; in spiritual life and in his life as a university professor and president, he continually turns to BYU's mission "to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Worthen is often described by friends and colleagues in paradoxical terms: brilliant, yet unassuming; physically towering, yet down-to-earth; visionary, yet deferential; he is a collaborative, unintimidating leader who has made innumerable contributions to his university; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Worthen has led Brigham Young University with integrity, passion, and vision, and he is most worthy of our approbation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Kevin J. Worthen for his many years of astute leadership and his dedication to Brigham Young University, extending our best wishes for much success and happiness in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.